A

LETTER

FROM AN

Arabian Phyſician

To a Famous

PROFESSOR

IN THE West

Univerſity of *Hall* in *Saxony*,

CONCERNING

MAHOMET's taking up Arms, his marrying of many Wives, his keeping of Concubines, and his Paradiſe.

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A LETTER, &c.

SIR,

MY natural Curiosity to understand the Religion and Learning, the Laws and Customs of foreign Nations, prompted me to leave my native Country, in order to travel into those Parts of *Europe*, where the Sciences are cultivated with the greatest Success; where the Policy of Courts, and the Manners of the People, are improv'd to the best Advantage; where the Arts both of Peace and War are carry'd to the highest Degree of Perfection; and, in one word, where Learning of all kinds thrives and flourishes. After having visited the most famous Universities in this part of the World, stu-y'd the Sciences, taught in them, and got acquainted with the greatest Men of those Learned bodies; it was my good fortune to come at length o your celebrated *Lyceum*, where my highest Expectations were fully answer'd. There I found len of the most extensive Knowledg, of the poliest Manners, of the profoundest Erudition, and

of extraordinary Civility: And I hope you will do me the juſtice to believe I do not flatter you, when I ſay, That the Figure you make, and the Character you bear in that illuſtrious Society, has not only charm'd me, but has likewiſe drawn the Eyes of all the World upon you. You are the bright Luminary that enlightens, warms, and cheriſhes that literate World; you are the Pole-Star by which the Studies of the riſing Generation are directed; you are the Oracle that pronounces the ſolid Doctrines and ſalutary Rules of Truth and Virtue: your Name will not only out-live Statues of Braſs and Marble, but even be of the ſame duration with Nature it ſelf: your Works are conſecrated to Eternity; and your learned Labours will ſtand the teſt of all the Violence and Rage of Time, till the whole World ſhall ſuffer an entire Cataſtrophe, by the univerſal Conflagration of all things.

I am invited to write you this Letter, from this famous Metropolis, out of a ſincere Deſire to prevail upon you to embrace the Truth; and I am encourag'd to it, by the Converſations we have had together concerning the Religion of my Country, and the great Founder of it, *Mahomet*, on whom be the Bleſſing of God. You were candid enough to own, that moſt of the Aſperſions and Calumnies thrown upon our Religion and our Prophet were falſe and groundleſs: but I well remember there were ſome things that ſtuck with you which was entirely owing to the Prejudices of your Education. You could not be reconcil'd to *Mahomet*'s invading his Neighbours, propagating his Religion by Arms, marrying many Wives, having Concubines, and promiſing to his Followers a Paradiſe conſiſting of all manner of Pleaſures of Senſe, as well as of the Mind. Theſe Points were

the great Cauſe of your Offence at our holy Religion: They appear'd to you to be invincible Objections againſt the Purity and Truth of it; and from thence you concluded, that our Divine Prophet muſt have been a vile Impoſtor. I heartily rejoice that I have to do with a Perſon of your Ingenuity, Perſpicacity and Learning; one who has made the deepeſt Reſearches into Nature, into the Laws and Religions of all Nations: for in virtue of theſe, which are the greateſt Ornaments of Human Nature, I am in hopes of overcoming all your Difficulties, reſolving all your Doubts, anſwering all your Objections, removing all your Scruples, and then convincing you of the Truth.

To begin then with our Prophet's attacking his Neighbours; it may be juſtly alledg'd in his Defence, That the Deſign of his taking up Arms at firſt, was only in order to recover the Government of the City of *Mecca*, and the Preſidency of the *Caaba* or Temple of that place, which undoubtedly belong'd to him by Hereditary and Divine Right. His Anceſtors had been in poſſeſſion of both for many Generations; and therefore he had as juſt a Title to them, as the Heir of any Prince can have to his Hereditary Dominions. And when he was reſiſted by the neighbouring Princes and Great Men, on his attempting to recover what he had loſt, only by being left an Orphan, it was no wonder that he made Repriſals when he had it in his power.

2*dly*. They who praiſe an *Alexander*, a *Ceſar*, a *William* the Conqueror, a *Lewis le Grand*, or any other ſucceſsful Tyrant, Uſurper or Conqueror, ſhew a very great Partiality in condemning *Mahomet*, who from the ſmalleſt Beginnings, with Equity and Juſtice on his ſide, laid the Foundations of

three of the greateſt and moſt flouriſhing Empires at this day in the World.

3dly. Such as declare for the Lawfulneſs of Force in Matters of Religion, cannot condemn *Mahomet* for propagating his by the ſame means, without manifeſt Partiality; eſpecially ſince he put no man to death merely upon the account of his Religion, but only made ſuch as would not embrace his Law, pay a Tribute that was not very grievous; in which he acted an infinitely more merciful and juſt part than any Sect of Chriſtians ever did, when they had it in their power to apply their wholeſome Severities to thoſe who differ'd from them, if it were only for wearing their Clothes in a different manner from them. Whether their Prieſts ſhould wear a Gown or a Cloke, or a Shirt above as well as under their Clothes, has been the occaſion of very warm Diſputes and hot Perſecutions in a very Orthodox Reform'd Church, as they call themſelves. It has likewiſe been diſputed with no leſs Eagerneſs than profound Erudition, by ſome very curious Divines, whether the Virgin *Mary*'s Womb (which the Caſuiſts, as well as the Fathers, very elegantly call *Vulva*) was open'd when ſhe brought forth her Son Jeſus Chriſt; that is to ſay, whether it was both open and ſhut at the ſame time: and whether the Hymen, which is very perceivable in ſome Virgins, could remain entire at the time of the Birth, when it muſt be neceſſarily broke. It has, to add no more, been debated with great Heat and Zeal in a primitive Convocation of the Clergy, whether the Virgin *Mary* or the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be declar'd the third Perſon of your Trinity. And I may venture to ſay, That there was hardly ever any Perſecution or ſtrong Faction in the Chriſtian Church, but for Trifles and Whims. You have reaſon to bleſs God, that

this

this Method of propagating the Goſpel is quite out of doors at this day, among all good Proteſtants, and all ſuch as underſtand the Genius of your Religion, which utterly diſclaims all ſuch Means: tho ſeveral Doctors and Fathers of the Church have wrote and preach'd up the practiſing of this bleſſed Method; and not a few of the Moderns have been drawn into this Deluſion by thoſe antient and venerable Names.

I ſhall only inſtance in the Learned and Orthodox Mr. *Jurieu*, (who is one of your own Communion) who, in his *Rights of the two Sovereigns*, has theſe remarkable words: "Can any "one deny, ſays he, that Paganiſm Pag. 280. "was deſtroy'd by the Authority of "the *Roman* Emperors? We may be bold to af- "firm, That Paganiſm would be ſtill in being, and "that three Fourths in *Europe* would ſtill be Pa- "gans, if *Conſtantine* and his Succeſſors had not "employ'd their Authority to aboliſh that Reli- "gion." And again he ſays, "The "Chriſtian Emperors extirpated Paga- Pag. 289. "niſm by pulling down its Temples, "deſtroying its Images, forbidding the Worſhip "of its falſe Gods; by appointing Preachers of "the Goſpel in place of falſe Prophets and "Teachers; ſuppreſſing their Books, and ſpread- "ing ſound Doctrine." And the ſame *Jurieu*, in his *Apology for the Reformation*, ſpeaking of the horrid Cruelties of the Papiſts, ſeems in a great meaſure to free us from the Charge of Perſecution and Force in propagating our Religion. His words are theſe: "It may be truly Tom. 2. p. 55. "ſaid, That there is no Compariſon *Edit. in 4to.* "between the Cruelty of the *Sara-* "*cens* againſt the Chriſtians, and that of Papiſts "againſt true Believers. In the Wars againſt

" the *Vaudois*, or even in the Maſſacres which be-
" gan on St. *Bartholomew's* Day, there was more
" Blood ſpilt upon the account of Religion, than
" was ſpilt by the *Saracens* in all their Perſecutions
" of the Chriſtians. 'Tis fit to cure Men of this
" Prejudice, *That* Mahometaniſm *is a cruel Sect,*
" *which was propagated by putting Men to their choice*
" *of Death, or the Abjuration of Chriſtianity.* This
" is in no wiſe true; and the Conduct of the *Sa-*
" *racens* was an Evangelical Meekneſs, in compari-
" ſon of that Popery, which exceeded the Cruelty
" of the *Cannibals.*"

Men, we ſee, are but little govern'd by Principles; for the *Mahometans* tolerate all manner of Religions, tho their *Alcoran* ſeems to encourage them to perſecute Infidels (which however will admit of a milder Interpretation, as is confirm'd by our conſtant Practice.) The Chriſtians do nothing but perſecute, wherever the Clergy's Power prevails over that of the Magiſtrate, or where their Dictates are look'd upon to be ſacred and infallible Oracles, tho their Goſpel forbids all manner of Perſecution for Conſcience ſake.

I may likewiſe draw this Concluſion from the Confeſſion of this Divine of your own Communion, and that of ſeveral others whom I could name if it was neceſſary; That the Doctrine of Perſecution, and propagating what Men call the true Religion by Swords and Axes, Fire and Faggot, is not of *Mahometan* Growth, but entirely owes its Original to the miſtaken Zeal of thoſe who falſly call themſelves Chriſtians.

I come now to our Prophet's marrying of many Wives, and keeping Concubines, which has given great offence not only to you, but to the whole Chriſtian World; tho to me it ſeems offence is

taken

taken where none is given. It had been a prevailing Cuſtom, time immemorial, for the Men in moſt Eaſtern Countries to marry many Wives and keep Concubines. Very ſoon after the Creation, that is, as ſoon as it could be ſuppos'd there might be an odd Woman, *Lamech* took two Wives without ever being cenſur'd for it; which, if it had been a Crime, would moſt certainly have been done in a very ſevere manner, to deter others from following the Example of this firſt ſuppos'd Tranſgreſſor or Innovator. The holy Patriarchs took the ſame liberty, without the leaſt Rebuke. *Jacob* marry'd two Siſters, who were both his Wives at the ſame time, and had two Concubines beſides. *David*, a Man according to God's own Heart, had about a dozen Wives, beſides Concubines, and a beautiful ſoft young Girl in his old Age, when his Appetite could reliſh nothing but Varieties and Dainties. *Solomon* the wiſeſt of Mortals, and King of God's own People by God's own Appointment, and inſpir'd to write Books as well as his Father *David*, which are to this day part of the *Jewiſh* Sacred Canon, was never tax'd for his thouſand Wives and Concubines, but only in ſo far as he ſuffer'd himſelf to be led aſide by them to worſhip falſe Gods; which might have happen'd, ſuppoſing he had had but one that was an Idolatreſs. From all which, I think the Lawfulneſs of Polygamy and keeping of Concubines appears very evident. Beſides, our Prophet had a ſpecial Permiſſion from God to marry as many Wives and keep as many Concubines as he pleas'd, in order to beget young Prophets, to multiply the Holy Seed, and propagate his Religion; for every Tribe into which he marry'd, embrac'd his Law.

As to the Pleasures of Paradise which he promises to those who should embrace his Religion, and live up to the Rules of it, there seems nothing so absurd and unreasonable in this, as is commonly imagin'd among you. 'Tis certain that at the Resurrection (and this is granted by all Christians) our Bodies shall be made the most perfect we can conceive, with all the Senses in their utmost Force and Vigour, and capable of the highest Enjoyment of their respective Objects. Now to suppose no Exercise of those Senses, no Objects suited to them to please and gratify them, were to suppose them not only to be given in vain, but to be given for our Pain and Torment. If we are to have the Senses of Tasting, Smelling, Feeling, Hearing and Seeing (which we must have if our Bodies are perfect) why should we imagine there will be no Objects of those Senses to affect and delight them? There is no Turpitude, no Sinfulness, no Meanness in such sort of Enjoyments: For in the State of Innocence, the Almighty took care, that the most perfect Couple that ever the World saw, should not be without them. When he created *Adam* and *Eve*, he placed them in a Garden which abounded with all manner of lovely and delicious Fruits, and caus'd pleasant Rivers to run thorow it, as well to quench their Thirst, as to water and refresh the Trees and Herbs; and if they had a mind to more generous Liquors, the Materials were all ready for them to make use of. He knew they could not subsist without Meat and Drink, even in their most perfect State; and therefore he dispens'd both to them, with a very bountiful and liberal Hand: nor can we suppose them in that happy State to have been without that most exquisite of all Pleasures,

ſures, which ariſes from the Act by which all Animals are propagated, and for which the Woman was given to the Man; for without that, they muſt have wanted the greateſt and moſt delightful Enjoyment Senſe is capable of, and the World continu'd uninhabited. It appears from the Scriptures which you hold to be Sacred and Divine, that Angels eat as well as Men; for the Manna which the Almighty ſhower'd down upon the wandring *Jews* in the Wilderneſs, is ſaid to be *the Food of Angels*. From all which it appears as clear as the Sun at Mid-day, that there is nothing baſe or ſinful in Eating and Drinking, and Propagating our Kind, even in the moſt perfect State that can be conceiv'd.

But further, if we conſider the Frame and Structure of animal Bodies, we ſhall find it impoſſible they ſhould ſubſiſt without Food, or a conſtant Supply of Nouriſhment from without. All Animals conſiſt or are compos'd of Solids and Fluids, which mutually act upon one another. The Heart and Arteries cannot move unleſs the Blood and animal Spirits flow into them; nor can the Blood move forwards, unleſs it be puſh'd and protruded by the Heart and Arteries. When theſe reſt and ceaſe from all Motion, the Fluids ſtagnate, and ſo the Animal dies. The Functions of Life, the Motion of the Muſcles, and that of the Fluids in their Channels, produce an Attrition of the Parts, apply ſuch as are made fit for Nouriſhment to the ſides of the Veſſels that contain thoſe Fluids, and the reſt are ſeparated either in the groſſer Excrements, or fly off by inſenſible Tranſpiration thro the Skin, Mouth, Noſe, Lungs, Oeſophagus, and Inteſtines; and the Quantity of this Tranſpiration or Perſpiration, in an Air like that of *Italy*, in a vigorous Conſtitution and perfect Health, amounts

to

to five parts in eight of all the Food we take in, according to the moſt accurate Computation of the Excellent and Learned *Sanctorius* in his *Medicina Statica*.

Beſides, without this conſtant Supply of new Matter for Nouriſhment, the Fluids grow ſharp and pointed, prey upon and diſſolve the Contexture of the Solids, and at laſt produce a Putrefaction, which ends in the entire Deſtruction of the animal Oeconomy. Now if we ſuppoſe (which we needs muſt) that thoſe bleſſed and heavenly Bodies are to be compos'd of Solids and Fluids, reciprocally acting upon one another, we muſt likewiſe ſuppoſe all the mention'd Effects to follow, as they are here ſpecify'd. Food therefore, we find, will be neceſſary; but whether it ſhall be the Nectar and Ambroſia of the Gods, Manna the Food of Angels, or only the Fruits of the Trees of Paradiſe, I ſhall not preſume to determine, becauſe our Law and the Interpretations of our Doctors do not condeſcend to define the particular ſort: nor is it material of what kind or ſpecies it be, ſince moſt certainly it will be ſuch as is beſt adapted and moſt proper for their State and Conſtitution, and ſuch as will anſwer all the Ends of the pureſt Nouriſhment, and the moſt refin'd Pleaſure.

I come, in the laſt place, to that Doctrine which has given the greateſt offence to the Enemies of our Law, and which alone is thought ſufficient to invalidate the whole Authority of it; I mean the Paradiſe of all true *Muſſulmans*, which is plentifully ſtock'd with the Fair Sex, with whom the true Believers are to ſolace themſelves thro all Eternity. This is the Doctrine which gain'd us more Proſelytes than all the other Doctrines in the *Alcoran*. And indeed a Doctrine that was ſo agree-

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able to the natural Inclinations of Mankind, could hardly fail of meeting with a general Reception, eſpecially among the Men of Arms, whoſe Minds are commonly turn'd to Gallantry, and who would not wiſh for a greater Reward for all their Fatigues and Dangers than the ſweet and kind Embraces of the Fair. It is not in the power of any Mortal not to be warm'd with the charming Idea of thoſe beautiful Ladies, " one of whom, if ſhe " ſhould appear here on earth, would make all " Mankind die for Love of her;" as *Ikrimah* ſaid, when he ſaw, or fancy'd he ſaw, one of them looking down from Heaven and ſmiling upon him, juſt as he was in the heat of Battel; which inſpir'd him with ſo much Courage and Reſolution, that he ruſh'd into the thickeſt of the Enemies Ranks, and haſten'd to his Death out of an ardent Deſire of enjoying her that moment.

Now, Sir, is there any thing ſo monſtrous and abſurd, ſo ſhocking and offenſive in this, as to make you reject the whole Syſtem of our Law? I do not believe you to be ſo prejudic'd and unreaſonable, as thoſe are who cannot or will not ſeparate the violent Paſſion and Rage of Love from the Idea they have of that Act by which Mankind is propagated; who think that Uncleanneſs and Voluptuouſneſs accompany it on all imaginable occaſions, and that at beſt it is but a brutal and beaſtly Act. But if you ſhould be ſtill ſo far prejudic'd in this matter, as to fancy there is ſomething too groſs and unbecoming a State of abſolute Perfection in this amiable Commerce of the Sexes, I hope to ſet you right only by two or three Queries, which you will be able to reſolve to your ſelf with the greateſt eaſe. I ask you then, Whether you believe *Adam* lay with his own Wife in the State of Innocence; or Whether you think he would have done ſo, ſuppoſing

posing them to have remain'd in that happy State? And whether there is any natural Turpitude, Vice or Crime necessarily accompanying and tied to the Act it self? If you say there is, then the Propagation of Mankind even in the most perfect State would have been vile and sinful; then a Man's enjoying his own Wife (which all Men take to be not only lawful, but a Duty) must needs be sinful; then Mankind (which is contrary to God's own Appointment) ought not to be propagated, and the World should be left desolate of Inhabitants of the Human Kind; the Absurdity of all which is, I think, evident to all rational Men. If you own there is nothing ill in the Act, why then do you make such a noise and clamour against a thing perfectly innocent in it self, and conceive Horrour and Indignation at the very Thoughts of it? Why should an innocent Diversion, accompany'd with vast Pleasure, be thought unfit for a Place, where nothing but Innocence and Pleasure dwell?

It is the Opinion of that enlightned and devout Saint Mrs. *Bourignon*, That there will be an eternal Propagation of Mankind in Heaven: And her very learned and pious Apologist not only believes this, but also that the blessed Angels are continually multiplying their Kind, and will do so for ever and ever. 'Tis true, both of them differ from us as to the manner of Propagation; for they imagine it done by a pure Act of divine Love, without any mixture of Sexes; which is mere Fancy, and of which we can have no manner of Idea: whereas we think it will be by a Junction of the Sexes, which is agreeable to the Order and Constitution of things, and of which every Man may have a very clear and distinct Idea. 'Tis certain nothing can more heighten our Idea of God's Greatness and Goodness, than this eternal Propagation

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of reaſonable Creatures, this endleſs Increaſe of his Family by a numberleſs Race of new Inhabitants every moment, who will be Partakers of unſpeakable Happineſs, and employ'd in ſerving and praiſing their Creator without ceaſing, for ever and ever.

After all, our Religion never intended to exclude intellectual Pleaſures, which will certainly vaſtly exceed thoſe of the Fleſh, as much as the Mind is more excellent than the Body. Nay, we are ſo far from excluding them, that we believe they will conſtitute the moſt refin'd and conſummate part of our Happineſs in Paradiſe. All we contend for, is, That our infinitely wiſe and bountiful Creator will ſuit our Pleaſures to our Frame and Make, and that he will give us cauſe to praiſe him on a double ſcore, for making us enjoy the higheſt Pleaſures both of the Mind and of the Body; the latter of which is quite diſcarded by you, without any foundation either in Reaſon, or even in your Scriptures, which determine nothing as to the particular kinds of your Happineſs in the heavenly Paradiſe.

May you long live in all the Satisfaction, Content and Happineſs of this World, and at laſt enjoy the eternal and uninterrupted Felicity of the Celeſtial Paradiſe.

Paris, June 14. 1706. of
the Chriſtian Æra.

Guardian